YOUR ENERGY CONNECTION

What Will Make 2006 an Above Normal Hurricane Season?

July 2006

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced to America and its neighbors throughout the north Atlantic region that a very active hurricane season is looming, and encouraged individuals to make preparations to better protect their lives and livelihoods.

During a news conference at the NOAA National Hurricane Center, Deputy Secretary of Commerce David A. Sampson noted, "Preparation is the key message that President Bush wants to convey. The impact from these storms extends well beyond coastal areas so it is vital that residents in hurricane prone areas get ready in advance of the hurricane season."

"For the 2006 north Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA is predicting 13 to 16 named storms, with eight to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which four to six could become 'major' hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher," added retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

On average, the north Atlantic hurricane season produces 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes. In 2005, the Atlantic hurricane season contained a record 28 storms, including 15 hurricanes. Seven of these hurricanes were considered "major," of which a record four hit the United States. "Although NOAA is not forecasting a repeat of last year's season, the potential for hurricanes striking the U.S. is high," added Lautenbacher.

Warmer ocean water combined with lower wind shear, weaker easterly trade winds, and a more favorable wind pattern in the mid-levels of the atmosphere are the factors that collectively will favor the development of storms in greater numbers and to greater intensity. Warm water is the energy source for storms while favorable wind patterns limit the wind shear that can tear apart a storm's building cloud structure.

This confluence of conditions in the ocean and atmosphere is strongly related to a climate pattern known as the multi-decadal signal, which has been in place since 1995. Since then, nine of the last 11 hurricane seasons have been above normal, with only two below-normal seasons during the El Niño years of 1997 and 2002.

"Whether we face an active hurricane season, like 2005 or a below-normal season, the crucial message for every person is the same: prepare, prepare, prepare," said Max Mayfield, director of the NOAA National Hurricane Center. "One hurricane hitting where you live is enough to make it a bad season."

The north Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30. NOAA will issue a mid-season update in early August just prior to the normal August through October peak in activity.

BEAT THE PEAK

"Peak" or "Peak Demand" is the greatest amount of electricity used at one time by an electric system, normally when a large number of customers are using appliances at the same time. By controlling the electric load or load management, we can keep electric costs in control. Rocky Mount averages approximately less than 10 days per month load managing. There are several options available:

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Electric Heat Strip Control- Heat strips are controlled during the winter load management periods, while compressors continue to provide heat. Customers receive **$15.00** credit each month if the temperature falls to 25 degrees or below on a non-holiday weekday.

Central Air Conditioning Total Control- Customers receive **$20.00** credit each month for July, August, and September. The compressor is turned off for the entire load management period. Fans will continue to circulate the cool air in your house, but your compressor will not generate any new cool air.

There are no installation or maintenance charges associated with this program.

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Call 972-1278, day or night to report power outages. Do not rely on your neighbors to make the call. Make it easier for you and call 972-1250 to update your phone number to make sure your home can be located when you call in through our Automated Voice Response System.

Preparing for Hurricane season

Prepare Property To Minimize Danger and Damage

- Make sure you have working emergency equipment such as flashlights, batteries, portable or stand-by generators and portable radios
- Look for weak spots in doors, windows and roofs
- Check all roof vents for proper installation
- Check for loose or clogged rain gutters and downspouts
- Trim trees and shrubbery so weak branches don't fall on the house
- Cut air channels through your trees to help save them